



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Tennessee Application #6120TN-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	65	65	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that describes its strengths, challenges and goals. These goals are clearly linked to the four education areas featured in the ARRA. LEA participation and commitment to its RTTT application is outstanding. There is unanimous support from its 136 school districts and 4 state special schools. 100% of superintendents and school board presidents signed MOUs. Furthermore, signatures were gained from 93% of applicable teacher associations/unions. There is also a strong letter of support from the president of the statewide teachers' association representing 55,000 teachers. The State expects some attrition of districts, but appears very committed to not wavering from its reform agenda. The state has made a strong commitment to the fidelity of its implementation. Its RTTT reform agenda fits well with its current reform efforts. Coupled with strong initial support the likelihood of statewide impact is great. Achievement goals are specific and related to RTTT assurances. Budgetary streams and projects fit the state's reform agenda.				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	30	30	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) New and innovative organizational support structures and teams have been created to manage and operate the states reform agenda. A First to the Top Team made up of Tennesseans and national experts will be responsible for leading and coordinating activities. As the governorship transitions to a new administration, a plan is in place for including new members on the First to the Top Team. The state will use field service centers and "delivery units" to actually bring educational reform to the schools. Current and future state and federal resources will be coordinated. An Achievement School District (ASD) will coordinate the work of intervening in the state's persistently low achieving schools. Stakeholder support is strong and broad based, which should greatly aide the state in implementing and sustaining its plans. The budget narrative and streams relate to and fit the state's plans.				
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	18	18	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	

(II) Improving student outcomes	25	13	13	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state is clearly making progress in all four ARRA areas and has nicely leveraged its ARRA, federal and state funds to support its initiatives. State assessments have demonstrated steady progress while NAEP scores have lagged and are well below national averages. The achievement gap between white and African American students persists. Graduation rates as currently measured have significantly improved. There is large gap between state and national assessment data that make it difficult to assess actual progress.				
Total	125	113	113	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(I) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(II) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) According to the application, Tennessee has a track record of being a leader in the areas of standards and assessments. Currently it is a member of the Core Common Standards consortium representing 48 states. Plans are in place to adopt the CCSs during the last two weeks of July, 2010 at a meeting of the State Board of Education. The state has set a clear time line and specific steps that must take place up the formal adoption in July.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state has joined 4 assessment consortia representing multiple states (the Achieve Consortium, the Florida Common Assessment Consortium, the Maine Balanced Assessment Consortium, and the SMARTER Consortium). The goal is to explore a variety of possible assessment options and then determine the best path forward for creating a system of common summative and formative assessments that meets Tennessee's needs.				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	14	18	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has a very detailed and extensive set of activities with a variety of different groups to transition into new standards and assessments. It appears to be more of a "laundry list" than a clear and memorable design process. The transition plan does not discuss building commitment and practitioner buy-in.				
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The state presentation clarified and validated that there is an excellent alignment and fit between overall transition activities and the state's existing culture of data based decision making.				
Total	70	64	68	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The Tennessee statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) includes all 12 elements of the America Competes Act and they have been fully implemented.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee's SLDS and highly acclaimed Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) will be merged through a user friendly dashboard that will give teachers a 360 degree view of their students. State wide teacher access to the TVAAS has risen from 14% to 100%. Now teachers will need further training to access and use the system.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state has clear goals and a plan to train every district in the state to use data for instructional improvement purposes. The plan begins with show casing leaders from around the state and sharing lessons learned from their experiences. Also MOUs require LEAs to support the development of instructional improvement systems. Furthermore, the First to the Top Act requires that 50% of teacher/principal evaluations be based upon student achievement data with 35% derived from TVAAS and 15% from other sources. The state will work with external organizations such as Batellell for Kids and SAS. Higher education will help with the implementation by requiring course work in teacher and principal preparation programs by developing modules on TVAAS, dashboards, and instructional improvement systems. A consortium focusing on research, evaluation, and development will be led by Vanderbilt University. Fully implementing these steps should significantly improve classroom instruction. An explicit plan focused on the formative classroom assessment of student learning for instructional improvement purposes is also needed. Such a plan would help teachers assess student learning in the classroom in a frequent and systematic fashion.				
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The state presentation acknowledged that the state had "built the car (data system) before the road" and that now is the time to build the road. In other words, it had developed a solution to a problem that was not clearly defined. Since TVAAS will be a determining factor in 35% of teacher evaluations, there will be a compelling need to routinely use TVAAS. A great deal of job embedded professional development will be needed to ensure routine and effective use.				
Total	47	44	44	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	15	15	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

Tennessee laws and regulations are supportive of alternative high quality pathways for teachers, but not principal licensure. Currently there are 5 existing programs for teachers and 1 for principals. During the 2008-09 year school year, 1300 teachers and only 11 principals were certified through these programs. Two of the programs are independent of IHEs, Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools. Alternative teacher pathways are more fully developed than those for principals.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Tennessee has measured student growth through its value added assessment system (TVAAS) since 1992. Now with 100% teacher accessibility, it could become a model for the rest of the nation. The State has a high quality plan to create a teacher and principal evaluation system centered on student achievement. The plan will build on the strength of having the most extensive longitudinal student achievement data system in the nation (TVAAS). The First to the Top Act calls for the creation of a teacher/principal evaluation advisory committee to develop and recommend guidelines critical for teacher and principal evaluation systems. State and national experts will also advise the team with an adoption deadline of July, 2011. These are significant steps, but at this stage, they represent more of a plan for a plan than a clear design process. It would make sense to pilot some of these ideas in several districts and make any needed adjustments before adopting them statewide in July, 2011. Under this new system teachers and principals will be required to undergo annual evaluations that are student achievement focused and linked to meaningful professional development. The First to the Top Act permits LEAs to adopt alternative salary schedules. Some very interesting ideas are emerging in the larger urban schools systems, notably in Memphis with the help of a \$90 million grant from the Gates Foundation. The state is to be commended for developing new standards for administrative licensure and accompanying scoring guides for the assessment of school leaders at various stages of career development.</p>				
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17	17	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Tennessee has the advantage of being able to identify ineffective teachers through its TVAAS. Although incentives, alternative programs, and recruitment efforts make sense, Tennessee's emphasis will to build the capacity of its teachers to improve and accordingly remain in the profession. The application does not directly address the equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high poverty, minority schools. Rather it emphasizes building the capacity of those already in those positions and retaining them. The application describes plans for equitable staffing in the areas of math and science, but only goes so far as to identify shortages in Special Education and ESL.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Improvement is tied to competition and accountability. First, new independent educational organizations will be allowed to certify teachers and principals. Second programs will be held accountable through the development of a report card that will be published highlighting teacher and principal effectiveness data, placement information and retention data. Although these ideas meet RTTT application requirements, they are limited in that they do not discuss continuously improving, developing, and supporting all of the states teacher and administrator preparation programs.				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	14	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The use of teacher and principal effectiveness data along with a new multiple measures teacher and principal effectiveness evaluation system will provide targeted and individualized professional development. A goal will be to reduce the number of ineffective teachers statewide from 30% to 10% over the four year span of the RTTT grant. Given the new RTTT definition of effective and highly effective teachers, this is an ambitious but perhaps unattainable goal. Furthermore, there is no corresponding goal targeted at reducing the number of ineffective principals.				
Total	138	113	113	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Through the passage of Tennessee's First to the Top Act of 2010 the state will create an "Achievement School District" of the state's persistently lowest achieving schools. These schools will be removed from their home districts and placed under state oversight. The state also has the right to intervene in LEAs.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state will create an intervention called the Achievement School District in partnerships with high capacity non profit organizations like KIPP or New Leaders for New Schools. It will also showcase how targeting the resources of an entire state can "jump start" and improve long time struggling schools. Each year the state has typically identified between 100-200 high priority schools and has worked to improve them through the Office of Achievement Gap Elimination. Exemplary Educators and Superintendents chosen from a pool of recently retired employees and targeted assistance teams (STAT) have been assigned to work directly with the schools. The success rate in moving these schools down at a least one level is 53%. The state has worked hard to identify and turnaround its persistently low achieving schools. RTTT funds will allow the state to make richer and more lavish interventions.				
Total	50	50	50	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The percentage of total revenues available to the state for public education rose from 43% in 2008 to 48% in 2009. Furthermore, all high needs students from K-12 schools received a crucial infusion of additional dollars from the state. The state has reduced inequities by steering more funds for targeted spending to high need school districts. The state also picks up 75% vs. 70% of costs in low wealth school districts. It has also worked to equalize teacher salaries in low income districts. It is not clear how per pupil expenditures actually compares across districts in Tennessee.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	29	29	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state has a charter school law that sets a cap of 90 or 5.1% of its schools. Currently, there are 22 operating charter schools in Tennessee. It appears that charters are restricted to low achieving students from poverty. Funding for charters and facilities appears to be equitable. Conditions supporting the creation of charter schools in Tennessee are moderately favorable.				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) There are numerous creative and innovative ideas emerging in Tennessee. The conditions are very favorable for school reform.				
Total	55	42	42	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0	0	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) STEM is mentioned throughout the application. What's needed is a clear and memorable design process for improvement.				
Total	15	0	0	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state has comprehensively and coherently addressed all the four education reform areas specified in ARRA. Its state success factors are very strong. Stakeholder commitment is exceptional.				
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				

The state presentation offered convincing evidence that it fully understands its challenges. Moreover, the state team was refreshingly transparent and honest in its responses to the panel's questions. The state has the experience, confidence and supportive culture to fully implement its school reform agenda.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	426	430	
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Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Tennessee Application #6120TN-2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	65	65	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee clearly articulated its education reform agenda. Building on a long history of effective reforms, the State is well-positioned to hit the ground running in its Race to the Top. Tennessee has presented a comprehensive plan to expand reforms already in place in the four Race to the Top areas. For nearly two decades, Tennessee has calculated student growth measures through its TVAAS assessment system. The State has linked student growth to teacher effectiveness and used it to inform decisions related to teacher employment. Tennessee can immediately begin to address the educator effectiveness measures called for under Race to the Top. The State also has laid the groundwork for raising academic standards through its American Diploma project which focused on developing a framework for college and career readiness. The State has set achievement targets for all students and for each sub-group. Tennessee is commended for securing the participation of all of its LEAs in the Race to the Top initiative. The State gave LEAs the option of either committing to all of the Race to the Top provisions as outlined in its Memo of Understanding (MOU), or not to participate. It did not allow districts to opt out of any of the scope of work. Therefore, the State has universal participation in all key Race to the Top reform areas. In addition to the LEA superintendent, all of the school board presidents and 93 percent of union leaders signed letters of support for the effort, further strengthening Tennessee's buy-in for Race to the Top. Union leaders in the State's five largest school districts (Hamilton County, Knox County, Memphis City Schools, Metro-Davidson County, and Shelby County) signed letters of support for the initiative. If awarded, Tennessee's grant would have the potential of reaching nearly every educator and student in the State including those in the highest-need schools.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	29	29	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	19	19	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee provided evidence that it has a strong management team and sound financial oversight procedures in place to provide quick implementation of the Race to the Top reforms. Tennessee's grant will reside in the Governor's office which will coordinate resources across the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission which are members of the management team. The team also includes a member of the Department of Finance to provide a high-level of financial oversight and grants management to ensure the funds are expended as planned. The application provided a

management plan which detailed roles, responsibilities, and procedures for program implementation, monitoring and fiscal control. There are concerns about locating the State's management team in a governor's office whose term will expire in the first year of the grant. This could undermine the grant's long-term sustainability should the new administration not be as supportive of Race to the Top. Also, given the critical role of IT in meeting the Race to the Top goals, it is not clear why a member responsible for IT is not part of the management team. In addition to securing universal LEA participation for Race to the Top, the application received widespread stakeholder support. Letters of support were provided from the State's teacher, principal, administrator, superintendent, and school board associations; the statewide charter school association; community-based organizations; parent groups; civil rights organizations; non-profit organizations; foundations; higher education institutions; the State's Congressional delegation; and leadership of the General Assembly. The letter from the Tennessee Education Agency notes that the organization encouraged local affiliates to sign letters of participation; this further suggests that the State will be able to work effectively with State and local union leadership to implement the Race to the Top's human capital reforms. Tennessee proposes to use Race to the Top funds to make targeted investments in building its infrastructure to support long-term reforms which should be sustainable after the grant ends. The State is using only a small portion of its budget to grow staffing at the SEA. Of the \$251 million requested for the State Innovation Fund portion of the grant, less than 3 percent will be used for agency salaries and fringe benefits. An analysis of the budget demonstrates the State's commitment to capacity building activities and services including: --\$49 million for the Achievement School District that will provide intensive supports to the State's lowest-achieving schools to rapidly raise student achievement; the State has the authority to directly intervene in these schools. --\$24 million to train LEAs and educators to use data to inform instruction. --\$9 million to create a Leadership Action Tank which will serve as a principal effectiveness laboratory. --\$6 million to contract with the STEM Centers of Excellence to provide professional development in the STEM-related fields.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	23	23	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Tennessee has already undertaken several reforms that coincide with the Race to the Top goals to improve achievement for all students including those who attend high poverty and high minority schools. The State leveraged its ARRA funding with other Federal and State funds to support these reforms. For example, the State has invested \$14 million in State funds, \$5.9 million in Federal funds, and \$2.7 million in ARRA funds to build a student management system and make improvements in the teacher certification system. The State also invested ARRA funds in professional development for leaders and Title II, Part A funds to address the equitable distribution of teachers. Significant work has begun in turning around the State's lowest performing schools with a \$29.6 million investment of State funds and \$6.5 million in ARRA funds. Tennessee appears to be identifying its reform needs, then targeting State and Federal resources to meet those needs. The State provided the required assessment data which show that Tennessee students have made achievement gains overall, but significant gaps remain between subgroups. The gap between Black and White students is most disconcerting. In some grades and subjects, the gap between Black and White students has widened. The gap between Hispanic and White students has narrowed somewhat. There was a concern that there was a disconnect between the results from the State and the NAEP assessments; however, the State addressed its need to increase the rigor of the State assessments. The State attributes overall increases in achievement to the implementation of its accountability system and professional development supports for teachers to meet accountability goals through the use of data.</p>				
Total	125	117	117	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee provided evidence that it is participating in CCSSO-NGA's Common Core Standards Consortium to develop common standards in mathematics and English-language arts that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. Fifty-one states and territories—a clear majority of states—are participating in the initiative. The State signed the MOU for the Common Standards in April 2009 and submitted evidence that it is actively moving forward in adopting them by August 2, 2010. A special State Board of Education meeting has been called for the last two weeks in July to adopt the standards.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The State is participating in several consortia to develop high-quality assessments, some with a majority of states participating. They include the Achieve/NGA Consortium (26 states), the Florida Common Assessment Summative Consortium (19 states), the Maine Balanced Assessment Consortium (35 states), the SMARTER consortium (19 states), and MOSAIC (25 states).				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee provided a well-developed plan to roll-out new standards to districts, schools, and classroom teachers. The plan presents a clear alignment between standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction. Central to the roll-out are major investments in consistent professional development on the standards delivered through multiple modes of instruction including synchronistic and asynchronistic learning opportunities. The plan includes a detailed and reasonable timeline for accomplishing the roll-out which will occur within the grant period. The State will purchase a learning management system (LMS) to provide a single portal and dashboard for educators to access user-friendly assessment data to identify areas for improving student instruction. The State has request \$11 million in Race to the Top funds to support the LMS demonstrating its commitment to putting this IT architecture in place. In addition to providing professional development to current classroom teachers, it will pilot a program to train future teachers on the new standards and assessments during their pre-service preparation.				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

The State has implemented all 24 of the America COMPETES data elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has already developed sophisticated data systems to address many of the Race to the Top requirements. It intends to use its Race to the Top funds to further strengthen its systems and to improve data accessibility to teachers and other stakeholders by constructing a dashboard that pulls data from both its State longitudinal data system and TVAAS system. The State is already piloting the dashboard in two large districts with its proposed vendor. Tennessee notes that in the recent past, only 14 percent of teachers had their own TVAAS accounts to review their students' progress and growth. In January, the State established accounts for all educators. The State provided a detailed timeline and plan for training educators on how to use the dashboard and interpret the data to improve instruction. The plan is aggressive; all LEAs are slated to have access to the dashboard in the 2010-11 school year. However, given that the State has a solid IT infrastructure in place on which to build, it is reasonable that it can accomplish this goal. While the State provided a clear action plan on making data more accessible to educators, it provided little detail on how data might be accessed by broader stakeholder groups. The State did not thoroughly address accountability provisions for teachers in non-tested subjects and grades who do not have value-added scores.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) As discussed above, Tennessee is making great strides in making user-friendly data available to all teachers to improve instruction. It has already committed significant resources to develop data systems to provide meaningful data to educators. The State has a growth measure in place and will use its Race to the Top grant to increase teacher knowledge on how to use these data to make informed decisions on improving student learning. The State will partner with the SAS Institute and Battelle for Kids to provide professional development supports to LEAs on how to access and interpret data. As with the standards roll-out, the State will use multiple methods of instruction to train teachers and principals. The State is dedicated to using its wealth of data to evaluate the effectiveness of its curriculum approaches and instructional materials by forming the Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (CRED). The consortium will be led by a well-respected national researcher and include researchers and practitioners. The consortium will be responsible for creating a research agenda. It is not clear how the State will handle research requests outside of the consortium or how it will address student and educator confidentiality in restricted use files.				
Total	47	44	44	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16	16	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The State provided a copy of its regulations as evidence that it has alternative pathways for teachers and principals that meet the Race to the Top definition of an alternative route. It is not clear how widely educators use these routes. The narrative states that between 1,300 and 1,600 educators received licensure through alternative routes; the denominator was not provided of teachers receiving initial licensure. However, with 65,000 educators employed across the state, it appears that the majority have been prepared through traditional routes. The State provided evidence that it monitors the supply and demand for its teacher workforce. The State provided compelling evidence that it will face a significant				

shortage by 2014 with over 30,000 teachers leaving the profession. Special education and STEM-related subject will be hardest hit. The State has already started to take action on increasing the pipeline for science and math teachers by replicating the UTeach program. The State proposes to expand the program to two more institutions. While the State is attempting to address its impending teacher shortage, it is not clear if it will reach its goal at current funding levels. The State is projecting that the UTeach program will provide 100 new math and science teachers each year by 2014. The State reported a serious impending shortage of special education teachers. The application does not provide a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain these educators. For example, it could not be determined from the narrative if the State will be using the Teach for America program as its primary route to fill the shortage of special education teachers. The State has not monitored the supply and demand of school leaders, though it intends to use Race to the Top funds to commission such a study.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee has been a national leader in the use of value-added assessment to measure teacher effectiveness. The State's TVAAS system was put into place in the early 1990s. Not only has Tennessee invested substantial resources in its IT systems to enable the student-teacher linkages and calculate growth, teachers have a long history using these measures. Value-added measurement employs sophisticated statistical modeling to measure teacher effectiveness which can be difficult for a layperson to understand. Teacher familiarity with value-added most likely will help the State secure educator buy-in as it moves forward in expanding the uses of these statistical models to inform human capital decisions. The State already has increased teacher access to their TVAAS accounts so they will have their effectiveness data at their fingertips to help them identify areas for academic improvement and differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. While the State has been on the forefront of the value-added measurement movement, it has had less success in developing multi-measure evaluation systems for educators. Some of the State's largest school districts have rigorous evaluation systems in place, but there does not appear to be a systematic approach or guidance from the State to districts on requiring multi-measure evaluation systems or what indicator should be included in these systems. The State provided a detailed and aggressive plan to develop a statewide approach for districts to construct evaluation systems by school year 2011-12. A stakeholder group, which includes educators, has been tasked with redesigning the State's evaluation system. The current proposal suggests that student achievement will comprise 50 percent of the evaluation and another 35 percent based on student growth. With such heavy weighting on student achievement data, it is not clear what solutions the State has to evaluate teachers in non-tested subjects or grades. The State has mandated that evaluations occur annually. It is not clear if this new evaluation system will need to be collectively bargained, and if so, how the State intends to secure teacher buy-in. The State has articulated its commitment to use educator effectiveness data to develop, compensate, promote, retain, grant tenure to, and remove educators. In the area of performance-based compensation, the State is proposing to use \$12 million in Race to the Top funds with matching private support to encourage districts to develop and implement alternative compensation plans. This is perhaps a better approach than mandating a statewide performance-based compensation program. Given that these plans often need to be negotiated with teacher unions, this approach gives districts the time and leeway to work with educators to secure authentic buy-in which could lead to longer-term success in reforming local salary schedules. The State has indicated that evaluation data will inform the removal of ineffective teachers as a last resort after all professional development and reassignment opportunities have been exhausted.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17	17	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	11	11	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>Because Tennessee has a mature value-added measurement system in place, it was able to move its conversation on equity from the distribution of highly qualified teachers to highly effective educators. The State used the Race to the Top definition of effectiveness in its analysis. The State provided an updated equity plan which is required under ESEA which showed that the State continues to experience staffing inequities in high poverty/high minority schools compared to low poverty/low minority schools. While the State has done a commendable job identifying staffing inequities through its robust data system, it has been less successful in implementing cohesive and effective strategies to ameliorate these inequities. Several districts, including Memphis, Knox County, and Nashville, have employed strategies to reduce inequities. However, the equity plan falls short in giving districts across the State research-based, practical, and proven strategies to ensure staffing equities between high poverty/minority and low poverty/minority schools. The plan does not discuss any barriers to hiring that may be driven by seniority provisions in union contracts or how the state has worked with union leadership to remove these barriers. The State did not address the equitable distribution of principals. As described in Section (D)(1)(iii), the State has analyzed data from its Teacher Supply and Demand study to identify hard-to-staff subjects which include mathematics, science, special education, and ESL. The State is facing particularly critical shortages of special education and ESL teachers. The State estimates that it will have a shortage of over 3,000 special education teachers and 500 ESL teachers by 2014. The State does not have a concrete plan in place to significantly increase the pipeline of these teachers in a short timeframe.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The State has made tremendous strides in evaluating the effectiveness of its teacher preparation programs. As it has described throughout its application, the State already has linkages in place between its elementary/secondary and postsecondary data systems. The application indicates that the State can evaluate teacher preparation programs in terms of teacher effect data, placement and retention, and Praxis scores. The State has convened a task force with broad stakeholder membership to develop an accountability report card on the effectiveness of the State's teacher preparation programs. The application notes the State's commitment to using these data for program renewal decisions. The State does not have such a well-crafted plan for evaluating programs that prepare school administrators, although it intends to convene a task force to develop such an evaluation in 2011. It appears that the State is focusing on expanding or contracting current traditional teacher preparation programs; it does not provide a discussion on new programs that might be created outside of the traditional preparation routes.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	14	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>Tennessee's application demonstrates it has the data systems in place to identify the professional development needs of teachers. The State's proposal is very strong on the data side, but weaker on how it intends to provide educators with on-going, job embedded professional development strategies designed to improve student achievement. Most of the discussion in this section is focused on supports available to teachers. It appears that the State has done little to advance the professional development opportunities for principals, though it will be establishing a Leadership Action Tank to address the issue. The State has</p>				

several initiatives in the planning stages, such as researching teacher induction supports to novice teachers and increasing the capacity of its Field Service Centers to help districts and schools develop professional development plans. Yet, it does not appear that the State has made a significant investment in proven professional development programs statewide. The State has articulated a more refined plan for improving professional development in the STEM-related fields. The State is partnering with several STEM organizations to improve the delivery of professional development in mathematics and science. It also appears that the State has not undertaken efforts to evaluate its current professional development systems and supports. It intends to use the TN Consortium of Research, Evaluation, and Development (TN CRED) to conduct research in this area to inform policy decisions.

Total	138	112	112	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The State provided copies of its legislation giving the SEA the authority to directly intervene in its persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee provided its method for identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools. Tennessee's commitment to turning around the lowest-achieving schools is new; the State does not have documented history of turning around low-performing schools using the models specified in the Race to the Top notice. However, the State has developed a thoughtful plan to address the needs of these schools both through policy reform and funding. The State will establish the Achievement School District comprised of schools identified for intervention. These schools will be restructured and given intensive supports to build their capacity aimed at improving student achievement in an aggressive timeframe. The State is proposing to devote a substantial portion—\$49 million, or 20 percent of its State Innovation allocation—to support its efforts in turning around persistently low-achieving schools.				
Total	50	50	50	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has made a concerted effort to increase funding for public education even in light of the economic downturn. The percentage of revenues devoted to public education increased from 43% in FY2008 to 48% in FY2009. Actual allocations also increased between the two years. Tennessee's school funding formula makes adjustments to equalize funding between high- and low-poverty districts.				

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	30	30	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>Tennessee's charter school laws require the State to cap the authorization of charter schools to 90 schools statewide. Conversion schools are not included in this cap. Charter schools can only be operated in districts with minimum enrollment of 14,000 students and have had at least three schools that missed AYP for two consecutive years. Of the 90 charter schools authorized, only 21 are in operation including conversion schools. While the state argues it has unlimited capacity for opening new charter schools because there is no cap on conversion schools, it appears that very few schools have converted. The State estimates that if all 90 charter schools were in operation, they would enroll 5 percent of the State's students. This is the figure used to arrive at the score for this criterion. The State has policies in place to monitor charter school performance which includes student achievement measures and may close schools if they do not make progress on student achievement indicators. Charters are granted for 10 years and are audited in their 5th year of operation. While student achievement can be a factor for non-renewal or closure, the State has closed only 1 school over the past 5 years and the reason was not given. This, coupled with the 10 year initial charter, suggests that charter schools are not closely monitored for the educational progress of their students. Charter schools receive the same per-pupil allocations as non-charters. The per-pupil expenditures are subtracted from the home LEA's allocation and reallocated to the charter school. The State provides per-pupil funding to charter schools for capital expenses. It could not be determined from the information provided if the funding formula for facilities based on per-pupil expenditures is adequate to cover capital costs for charter schools. The State enables a limited number of autonomous public schools other than charters. These include LEA partnerships to partner with post-secondary institutions to establish innovative high schools and a program that allows students in Nashville to receive credit for classes taken at Vanderbilt University. These options appear not to be widespread or enroll a significant number of students. The State does not appear to have other choice options such as open-enrollment programs.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>In addition to the existing reforms the State is building upon to address the four Race to the Top areas, it pointed to its history with pay for performance, its new charter schools incubator, and the establishment of the Achievement School District to address the needs of its lowest-achieving schools as important conditions to further stimulate reform. These are favorable conditions for implementing the Race to the Top reforms.</p>				
Total	55	45	45	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>As detailed throughout its application, Tennessee has undertaken several initiatives to support teaching and learning in the STEM-related areas including strengthening math and science standards, improving and expanding professional development for STEM teachers, and increasing the pipeline of teachers in STEM subjects. In addition, the State has established the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network which is a joint venture with Battelle and the University of Tennessee. Tennessee will partner with the state of Ohio in this endeavor. The network will create exchanges so teachers can share best practices related to improving STEM instruction.</p>				

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee clearly articulated its education reform agenda. The State has secured 100 percent participation of its school districts and provided evidence that the application was crafted with broad stakeholder input and support. The State has provided clear timelines and has established a strong management team for accomplishing its Race to the Top reforms. The State has committed to using Race to the Top funds to make large, short-term investment in its infrastructure that will support long-term reforms. Because funds will be used to shore-up its infrastructure and not to add a significant number of agency positions that would need to be supported after the grant ends, the plan has strong chance for sustainability. Building on a long history of effective reforms, the State is well-positioned to hit the ground running in its Race to the Top. Tennessee has presented a comprehensive plan to expand reforms already in place in the four Race to the Top areas. For nearly two decades, Tennessee has calculated growth measures for student growth through its TVAAS system. The State has linked student growth to teacher effectiveness and used it to inform decisions related to teacher employment. Tennessee can immediately begin to address the educator effective measures called for under Race to the Top. The State also has laid the groundwork for raising academic standards through its American Diploma project which focused on developing a framework for college and career readiness.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Tennessee's Tier 2 presentation reinforced statements in its application about its capacity to scale-up to quickly implement the major Race to the Top reforms. The State made a compelling argument that it enjoys widespread stakeholder and district support of the Initiative, validating information contained in the application. The presentation team clearly articulated the State's comprehensive reform agenda and how it links to each of the four reform areas specified in ARRA, reaffirming this reviewer's initial observations that Tennessee is well-positioned to hit the ground running in its Race to the Top.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	453	453	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Tennessee Application #6120TN-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	64	64	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	44	44	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant has set forth a clear statement of its vision for applying to Race to the Top (RTTT), providing a brief history of the reforms that have taken place over the past 18 years, including the state's leadership role nationally in collecting and using continuous longitudinal data and the wide show of bipartisan support among state political leaders and stakeholders for the proposal. All seven candidates for Governor from both political parties have pledged their support in letters. By passing the Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010, the applicant has recently unlocked statutory barriers to using data for key employment decisions for teachers and created an "Achievement School District" allowing the commissioner of the State Department of Education to intervene in consistently failing schools. The applicant acknowledges it must raise its standards (by adopting the Common Core), introduce aligned assessments and professional development aimed at raising levels of proficiency on NAEP and new state assessments, and make it a higher priority to graduate college- and career-ready young adults. The applicant's goals cover all four education areas described in ARRA and presents a clear path to achieving those comprehensive reform goals. The state demonstrates that it is prepared and poised to use RTTT to bring its K-12 education system to the next level. All of the applicant 136 school districts and 4 state special schools have signed MOU committing to RTTT. There is no variation in the MOUs. All districts were given the choice to fully participate in all scope of work areas, or decline to participate entirely. There are no middle status "involved" LEAs. 100% of superintendents and applicable school board presidents signed the MOUs and 93% of applicable teachers' union presidents. This demonstrates exceptional commitment by the applicant and its LEAs to the goals of RTTT. The applicant is clear that it started from the beginning of this process focused on broad statewide impact, and that it will not sacrifice the strength and innovation of the reforms presented for the sake of unanimity among all 140 LEAs and state schools. The applicant sets ambitious yet achievable achievement goals for increasing proficiency in math and reading on the state assessments and the NAEP, decreasing achievements gaps between subgroups on these tests, increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment and the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit within two years of enrollment. On the state assessment, the applicant expects scores to decrease before rising but for 100% proficiency on math and reading for all students in grades 3-8 and high school to be reached on state assessments, with no achievement gaps. For NAEP, the applicant anticipates significantly narrowed achievement gaps in 8th-grade reading and math, with specific goals for narrowing of achievement gaps by subgroups. College enrollment increases and gains in completion of college credit are aggressive. All this indicates a very high likelihood that reforms the applicant seeks to implement will lead to significant statewide impact.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	28	28	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The applicant describes how it will assemble a First to the Top Oversight Team by April so that the state can begin implementation efforts immediately upon winning a grant. This team will be informed by a consortium tasked with designing the extensive research elements of the state's proposed reforms. The commissioner of education is currently reorganizing the state department of education to provide effective ongoing management to RTTT reforms. The applicant is aligning all of its current and future federal and state resources to the core goals and activities in its RTTT proposal. Data-focused and results-oriented nonprofit organizations will provide specific technical assistance to educators, train regional delivery staff, and develop state-specific products that will outlive the grant period. A detailed and clear budget is provided as an appendix, as are an impressive collection of letters of support from the state's teachers union and principal association, and many other critical stakeholders. The budget provides some but not extensive information on how the state will coordinate, reallocate, or repurpose education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals.</p>				
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	22	22	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The applicant demonstrates progress already made in each reform area--under the Tennessee Diploma Project, its vast value-added data system, professional development activities for school leaders, the State's Equity Plan, and an office dedicated to assisting districts with achievement gaps. A score in the "high" range is awarded for (A)(3)(i). The applicant details its history of improving student outcomes overall and by group. It highlights two key policy strategies as being important to the rise in student achievement rates: creation of an accountability system for all schools that spelled out concrete and measurable student achievement goals and designing supports for teachers and schools to meet those goals based on the use of data. Special attention is paid in the narrative to resources deployed for high priority schools and for increasing its four-year graduation rate. The applicant acknowledges that it must work harder to eliminate the large gap between what state proficiency scores show and what NAEP assessments show. The applicant's RTTT proposal is focused in large part around this problem (for example, introduction of a new test aligned to tougher Common Core standards). A score in the high end of the "medium" range is awarded for (A)(3)(ii).</p>				
Total	125	114	114	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

The state expects to adopt the Common Core standards at a special State Board of Education meeting in the second half of July 2010. Forty-eight states are involved with the Common Core consortium. Through the Tennessee Diploma Project, begun in January 2007 in collaboration with Achieve, the state is already phasing in new, more rigorous academic standards linked to assessments, more rigorous high school requirements, aligned college entrance requirements, and student supports. Documentation of evidence for (B)(1)(i) and (ii) is complete, and full points are awarded for each component of this subsection.				
(B)(2) Developing and Implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant is involved with the Achieve/NGA/CCSSO consortium (26 states), the Florida Common Assessment Summative Consortium (14 states), the Maine Balanced Assessment Consortium (35 states), the SMARTER Consortium (19 states), and the MOSAIC Consortium (25 states). MOUs are provided as evidence, and full points are awarded for this subsection.				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant lays out a clear and comprehensive high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked standards and aligned high-quality assessments building towards college- and career-readiness. The applicant focuses on the process for developing and rolling out new standards into the state's classrooms, new end-of-course assessments, the state's new accountability system that will begin to reflect measures tied to college- and career-readiness, revision of university admissions requirements, community partnerships, and professional development activities that will be rolled out (in person, online, and school specific). Considerable attention is placed on plans for introducing a balanced assessment system developed with multiple consortia of states (formative, interim, benchmark, and summative assessments). The state's higher education system will have a large role in training teachers to use data for review of student achievement against new standards and professional development for schools that have entered the state's accountability continuum.				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant's current longitudinal data system meets the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. The applicant was also one of only 11 states in the nation to have all 10 essential elements of statewide data systems as measured by the non-profit Data Quality Campaign.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant sets forth a high-quality plan for ensuring data from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) will be expanded and access improved. In January 2010, every educator in the state was provided a TVAAS access account and temporary password. The opportunity for data access is now live and available to every school building (largely through T1 lines). A data dashboard will be developed that integrates SLDS data to further expand the predictive power of				

TVAAS and create a 360-degree view of a student. These data will inform instruction and engage policymakers and key stakeholders, and significantly increase teacher, school, and district-level use of previously inaccessible and underused information.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The applicant and partners will train every district in the state to use data for instruction, provide direct and user-friendly access to the state's data assets, and support LEAs in learning to use data to accomplish educational goals. Exemplary districts will be showcased as examples of how systems can work to improve instruction and provide opportunities for others across the state to learn from them. New legislative mandates on the development and use of an annual multiple-measure teacher and principal effectiveness evaluation will result in preparing teachers and leaders to engage more deeply with the TVAAS system and use it to inform human capital decisions. A contractor and a non-profit training partner will collaborate to deliver statewide supports to build teacher and school leader capacity in using instructional improvement systems and the resulting data. Teacher and principal preparation programs will be supported in integrating specific training modules for TVAAS. Little discussion was provided on how classroom formative assessments for learning (not just assessments for achievement levels or proficiency) would be included in the professional development. The applicant is creating a Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development to put into place a series of initiatives to assess the success of the applicant's innovative reform efforts and identify areas of greatest opportunity and challenge. The applicant has done much work already in developing statewide systems to use data to improve instruction. The reforms the applicant proposes in this area are aimed at refining and improving the state's significant past work in this area. A score in the "high" range is awarded.</p>				
Total	47	45	45	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	14	14	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>Applicant has provided information on the State's applicable laws and regulations and information on the elements of the State's alternative routes, which meet all 5 characteristics of the definition for alternative routes to certification. Such routes are in use for both teachers and principals, although few principals are currently in the one program providing an alternate route for administrators. 1,300-1,600 people annually receive licenses as teachers or administrators in Tennessee through five well-established programs for teachers and one program for school leaders. The applicant has commissioned a major study to measure supply and demand for its teacher force. If current pipelines are unchanged, the applicant will have a shortage of over 31,000 teachers by 2014. To meet the shortage, the applicant recognizes it must grow its existing traditional and alternative teacher certification programs, and measure these programs' effectiveness based on their graduates' ability to produce student outcomes. Several strategies are discussed, but these strategies, as detailed, appear unlikely to be sufficient to fill all the areas of shortages.</p>				
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	54	54	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	

(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The applicant has the largest student database ever assembled and was the first state to measure student growth through value-added assessment. The applicant (or its partners) will build on this by expanding access to value-added data to 100% of teachers and principals; monitoring and reporting on usage of the system at the teacher, school, and district levels; training every teacher and principal in use of value-added data for differentiated instruction, curriculum choices, and more; training districts in use of value-added assessment for compensation and direct links to teachers' and principals' evaluations; and integrating training on value-added data into the state's public teachers preparation institutions' methods course. The applicant seeks to redesign its evaluation systems with student achievement data as a required significant components. A Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee that includes interests representing teachers and principals will be created and charged with developing and recommending to the State Board of Education guidelines and criteria for a multiple-measures teachers and principal effectiveness evaluation system, which will be administered annually. Objective student achievement data will comprise 50% of the evaluation--35% will be based on student growth on TVAAS or some other comparable measure. There will be four or five summative rating categories. All participating LEAs will use the new multiple-measures evaluation system to conduct annual reviews. The state plans to work collaboratively with its LEAs to help educators have timely access to key student data, understand how to use the data effectively, and how to use the data to drive instructional performance. The state recognizes it must improve its professional development and coaching offerings by developing a more customized approach. The applicant will work with and provide support for its LEAs to create clear, differentiated career paths for teachers and principals, based on their performance levels using the new evaluation system. The applicant will create a competitive Innovation Acceleration Fund to support the adoption and implementation of alternative compensation systems at the local level and, with local communities, aggressively seek private matching funding. The state recommends but does not require that local boards only grant tenure to teachers who have met an established performance threshold of at least an "effective" rating on the new multiple-measure effectiveness evaluation. Districts will also be able to, and be expected to, identify tenured teachers whose performance falls in the bottom tier of teachers. The applicant has set a goal of reducing the percentage of teachers and principals who are rated ineffective to below 10% in four years, and thereafter to 0%. Documentation for action (pathways to dismissal) will include the evaluation documents and the data used to inform them.</p>				
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	19	19	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The applicant's strategy focuses on its 2010 Teacher Equity Plan, which concentrates on the six districts with the largest teacher equity gaps. Additional focus is given in applicant's plan to recruiting, retaining, and developing more effective teachers, and equipping principals and district leaders with teacher effectiveness data and holding them accountable for moving more teachers into the upper levels of effectiveness and improving or removing teachers in the lowest levels of effectiveness. Less discussion is provided concerning the equitable distribution of principals in high-poverty and high-minority schools than teachers. The applicant's plan calls for the state's equity gaps to be eliminated in four years and to ensure students in high-poverty, high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. More detail would have been appreciated on specific steps needed to be taken in the state's high-poverty, high-minority schools with the biggest inequitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. The state details plans to increase the number of effective math and science teachers but acknowledges that increasing the number of effective special education and ESL teachers is more challenging. The applicant</p>				

plans to determine a valid measure of the achievement of teachers of special education and ESL students and credit it to the instructors. The applicant plans to increase the number of effective teachers in shortage areas so that 90% of the teachers (in shortage areas, and generally) in all schools are deemed effective by 2013-14.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant already performs analyses of State teacher preparation programs that consider teacher effect data, placement and attrition, and Praxis scores. Independent education organizations are allowed to be certifiers of teachers in the state. The applicant publicly reports data for each credentialing program in the state. The applicant already has a large number of teacher credentialing programs (39) and principal credentialing programs (20). A stakeholders group will be convened in 2010 to study report card redesign options and work on issues of report card usage, such as the renewal or non-renewal of state approval for teacher and principal preparation institutions shown to be ineffective. Successful programs will be expanded.				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant provides a detailed plan for using teacher effect data and the new teacher and principal evaluation data to drive all professional development investments made in the state. Professional development will no longer be menu-driven. The keys to these reforms will be realigning investments and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness and changing how the state and LEAs use the data system as a tool for identifying areas needing performance improvement. More attention is paid in the proposal on supports for teachers than for principals. The applicant recognizes that its STEM data is troubling and provides specific strategies to address STEM learning. The state will develop a Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development to identify advantage in research projects and recommend ongoing refinements to professional development programming.				
Total	138	115	115	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) In the new Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010, the State Department of Education and School Board have unprecedented authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs failing to produce results. Specifically, the State gave the Commissioner authority to create an "Achievement School District" comprised of the State's lowest-achieving schools that will be removed from their home district and placed under state oversight.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant will identify the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools (from Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools) by completing a sequence of steps. The applicant will evaluate the 13 schools eligible for possible inclusion in a state-run Achievement School District (ASD). The applicant will target the 18 schools in Corrective Action or Restructuring 1 with serious interventions before they reach eligibility for the ASD. All schools whose absolute achievement places them under the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving" will implement one of the four turnaround models in the RTTT guidelines, no matter what their levels of NCLB accountability or whether they become part of the ASD. The plan is of sufficient high quality and sets ambitious yet achievable annual targets to support LEAs in turning around these schools. Since 2001, interventions have resulted in 53% of high-priority schools achieving good standing after being placed on the list. A wide variety of approaches have been implemented within the turnaround, closure, and transformation models.

Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant increased its percentage of total revenues available to the state for public K-12 and higher education from 43% to 48% between FY2008 and FY2009. Since 1992, the applicant has used a funding formula called the Basic Education Program to provide equitable K-12 public education funding. In 2004-05 the applicant changed the BEP program to direct additional dollars to high-need systems in an attempt to equalize teaching salaries. Further changes were made in 2007 to support high-needs districts, and those changes are about 60% implemented as of January 2010.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools

40

28

28

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This subsection has five elements (subsections (a) to (e)). The new state cap on charter schools is 90 (if reached, that would equal 5.1% of all public schools in the state). This cap does not include conversions of existing schools into charter schools. In qualifying districts (five districts with a minimum enrollment of 14,000 with at least three schools on the high priority list), all students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch qualify to attend charter schools in the LEA. Districts not qualifying can open up eligibility to all free and reduced students by vote of the local school board (2/3 vote). Otherwise, more stringent restrictions appear to apply as to who is eligible to attend a charter school. These restrictions appear to moderately or severely inhibit which students may attend charter schools in the state. The cap and the attendance restrictions contributed to a loss of points for the first element. Charter applicants apply to their LEA for approval, and if denied, can appeal to the State Board. The charter laws govern how charter schools are approved, monitored, held accountable, reauthorized, or closed. The law encourages the creation and maintenance of charter schools that serve populations similar to local student populations, with special assurances that charter schools serve high-need students (priority in enrollment by lottery if the school is oversubscribed). The state has closed 1 charter school since 2004-05. The applicant requires equitable funding for charter schools. Under state law, charter school students receive the same per-pupil funding that would have followed them to a school district if the students had enrolled in a non-charter public school. The per-pupil amount passes through the LEA to the charter schools, and the LEA cannot deduct a portion of the allocation for administrative costs. The applicant imposes no facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. Charter school students in this state receive per-pupil funding for capital expenses, which may be used for rent for school facilities, construction, renovation, leasehold improvements, or debt service. The applicant also has other innovative school

options, beyond charter schools. LEAs may partner with higher education institutions to establish innovative high schools, and LEAs can develop innovative educational programs (non-charter public schools of innovation and non-traditional high schools, for example). Applicant was scored in the "high" range for elements (b) to (e), but in the "low" range for element (a), as described above. The overall score for this subsection reflects a score in the high part of the "medium" range. Most, but not all, of the conditions for ensuring successful high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools are present in this state.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant highlights a charter school "incubator" in Nashville Public Schools and two counties that have adopted differentiated pay programs in an effort to raise student achievement and other policies at the state-level. These differentiated pay programs have a potential to pave the way for further experimentation with differentiated pay plans in this state. These programs provide additional evidence of favorable conditions for education reform in this state and complement the reforms highlighted elsewhere in the applicant's proposal.				
Total	55	40	40	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant addresses STEM policies and innovations throughout its proposal, including a new public education partnership with a global research and development enterprise that will work with the state and LEAs to establish a statewide network of programs and schools designed to promote and expand the teaching and learning of the STEM disciplines. The applicant is actively pursuing a strategy to produce and support STEM educators, develop curriculum linked to the state's STEM industries, create new pathways to STEM careers, and partner with multi-sector regional organizations and companies to raise student achievement in STEM. Specific goals related to increasing the numbers of students graduating with the Tennessee Diploma Project diploma and going on to complete degrees in STEM fields, the number of students who enter STEM careers, and the number of women, minority, and economically disadvantaged students who participate in STEM fields are provided. Additional focus is provided on reducing achievement gaps and enhancing overall student performance in STEM disciplines.				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
This is an exceptional application—clear, well-organized, comprehensive, and detailed in how the applicant will use RTTT funds to implement significant reforms across all four education reform areas of the ARRA, as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state demonstrates that it is committed to adopting and developing wide-ranging reforms focused on raising student achievement and to implementing them				

statewide. The applicant has taken a serious, systemic approach to RTTT that meets the threshold for being considered for funding.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The State team's presentation confirmed what was already apparent in the State's application: Tennessee is a State highly worthy of funding under RTTT. Its history of reforms across the education reform areas of the ARRA, as well as the State Success Factors Criteria, has brought the State to the point where it has clearly thought through where it wants—and needs—to go, and the State has marshaled the political will to venture forth and to do right that which it seeks to accomplish. The State is already moving ahead at a fast pace on many areas of the reforms, and while there are many moving pieces, it has provided a solid plan for comprehensively reforming its State K-12 education system during the course of a RTTT grant and for building the internal and external capacity needed to sustain those reforms over the long-term.

One general area of disappointment with this application and with the State team's responses to questions is the level of the State's commitment to charter schools. During the State team presentation, when asked, the team did not provide a clear explanation for why the State has chosen to maintain a cap and eligibility restrictions in its charter school legislation, or a clear vision for how charter schools fit in with the extensive plans for reforming K-12 education through RTTT. The State appears pleased to have charter schools, but they do not appear to have a well-developed plan for integrating charter schools with their RTTT efforts.

In sum, despite the charter school caveat, this State is serious about systemically reforming K-12 education to achieve greater academic gains and close achievement gaps. It is poised to use a RTTT grant as a strategic investment to implement their reform plans over the next several years.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	444	444	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Tennessee Application #6120TN4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	59	59	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The application provides a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda centered on human capital development, clearly stating its goals, and setting a credible path toward their achievement. However, the credibility of the reform path regarding persistently low-achieving schools, given the related prior measures in place, seems unclear, as does the integration of the five core components of the reform agenda. MOU and SOW language reflects strong commitment across LEA's, as does 100% agreement on the SOW. LEA commitment is further evident in the fact that 131 of 136 participating districts provided all three signatures to the MOU, though "obtained" signatures are slightly lower at 85% for local teachers' union leaders. Strong evidence is provided for considerable statewide commitment. Clear and ambitious goals for improving student achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment/credit completion, and for decreasing achievement gaps are described. However, the basis for the projections and their achievability remains unclear. The early and steep rises in several targeted indices remain to be justified in the application.				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	27	27	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The application indicates a strong and thoughtful approach to state-level leadership and coordination, building upon the broad coalition represented in the proposal. There is attention to a mix of stakeholders and expertise, including external research. The inclusion of deliberate structural/cultural changes intended to TDOE, along with the pursuit of alignment with non-governmental funding, promise longer-term impact. The basic design/intent of a key new structure, the Delivery Unit, requires further clarification, relative to the capacities needed and the implications for current operations. Several projects/components supporting the development of LEA's and Field Service Centers are described; whether the resource allocation and programming supports the dramatic local human capital capacity-building implied in the plan is not clear. Given the difficulty of affecting such capacity, further information regarding this level of impact is warranted. The application appropriately builds upon and expands several existing support networks/structures, particularly for STEM initiatives. Post-grant plans, especially regarding resource allocations and sustenance of the reform effort, require further clarification. Evidence of support from a broad range of state organizations from a variety of sectors and interests is provided. The over 120 pages of support letters include the state's union, candidates for governor, congressional delegation, senior state officials,				

universities, foundations, parent organizations, charter groups, school board association, corporate representatives, educational service organizations, civil rights groups and reform organizations(see appendix). Several of these organizations are explicitly indicated in project-level budget planning documents.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	15	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

State provides clear evidence of progress in each of the four reform areas in terms of policy initiatives and some programming. The application provides a mixed picture in terms of progress in raising achievement and closing gaps; achievement rises and gaps lessen on state assessments, but stay generally flat with several gaps increasing when gauged by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores. The linkage to state policy actions is quite unclear; the longstanding accountability system described coincides apparently with sustained low performance levels for many of those years(though data provided in the application pre-2003 is minimal). Of the High Priority schools provided supports [Office of Achievement Gap Elimination (AGE), Exemplary Educators (ED), System Targeted Assistance Team (STAT)], roughly half moved to "good standing" since 2001; that two of the initiatives were implemented within the last 3 years makes connections to interventions less than clear. Further, for graduation rates, much of the progress (2/3) occurs prior to 2006, after which yearly progress drops to a third of the average the prior two years. Per the Balfanz/West study provided, roughly half of the laudable progress on graduation rates appears related to Memphis and the shift in special education degrees to regular degrees, with a mix of policy interventions likely responsible for the balance. Obviously, there is likely a complex causality here; the relation to the current plan uncertain. In addition, a number of caveats to the picture of achievement progress should be noted: 1) While state biology scores show little closing of gaps, state scores show progress and significant gap closure in elementary science, high school and elementary math, and high school and elementary reading/language arts; e.g., White-Hispanic gap drops 2/3 between 2003 and 2009 in elementary math; e.g., White-African American high school reading gap in 2009 is 43% of what it was in 2003. 2) NAEP shows no such pattern of gap closure; e.g., grade 4 NAEP reading gaps (White-African American, White-Hispanic) both show increases 2003-2007; NAEP grade 4 math scores, showing the most dramatic overall progress 2003-07, show significant increase in African American-White gaps; the proposal recognizes the differences between NAEP and state assessments, yet the data raise serious questions as to the nature of progress made, and relatedly, the nature of those interventions to be recommended for this proposal. 3) Of the progress in gap closures in state elementary achievement scores, 76% and 85% of the closure in math and reading respectively occurs by 2005, raising questions about the mix of policy/programming linked to this performance, with implications to claims made for aspects of the proposed plan; NAEP progress in grade 4 math shows a similar pattern, with 83% of 2003-2009 progress occurring between 2003-05. 4) Limited English Proficiency data from 2005-07 shows a drop in elementary science, high school math, elementary math, elementary reading (also in NAEP grade 4 math), raising questions of a possible systemic influence relevant to the proposed plan.

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Presenters demonstrated candor in recognition of performance trends, and acknowledged the need for dramatic shifts in policy/practice. The presentation clarified and reinforced the policy narrative provided in the text.

Total	125	106	106	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The application shows strong evidence of participation in a broad consortium of states (Common Core), and indicates prior participation in standard-setting initiatives with other national entities (e.g., American Diploma Project, CCRPI). The state outlines its plan for Board of Education adoption of new standards by July 2010, and provides evidence of its legal authority to do so.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state participates in five consortia developing assessments -- Achieve/NGA/CCSSO, Florida Common Assessment Summative Consortium, Maine Balanced Assessment Consortium, SMARTER, and MOSAIC - three with 50% or more of states participating.				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	16	16	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state provides a good plan for supporting the transition, with attention to standards/assessment development and rollout, professional development, partnership support across non-school entities, and linkages to higher education, particularly admissions and teacher preparation. Regarding professional development design: the centralized needs assessment and other tools (including "just-in-time" PD/content) offer some promise, though prior work in this area raises some question of cost/benefit. The degree to which the professional development could gain self-sustaining momentum as a community of professional practice, with impact on instructional norms/practice, is unclear. The inclusion of a Network of Effective Practice, a positive element, would develop late in the transition, and does not appear to have the governance/direction from practitioners that would be needed to build sustainable supports. Center-periphery dissemination practices seem to dominate over network-enhancing lateral supports, counter to research consensus on effective professional development. The use of school- and district-based teams, along with statewide work sessions and specialized assistance to High Priority schools seem consistent with general practice elsewhere, though impact has often been uneven without specific measures to embed PD within work sites and routines. How this is taken into account in the plan design is unclear, as is the degree to which shifts in local site professional practice/routines would be facilitated by this plan. The plan supports a balanced approach to assessment, with multiple types, including support for teacher-generated assessments aligned to the common core standards to be adopted. The format to be taken by assessments, along with the role of teachers in those assessments, appears unclear, although the fact that "all tests will be scored electronically" may indicate that the opportunity for professional development via active teacher roles in assessment will remain untapped.				
Total	70	66	66	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The application provides evidence of fulfilling and exceeding all of the America COMPETES elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) In January 2010, access (account and temporary password) was just provided to all educators to the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), and a subset of districts is now working to develop a user-friendly data dashboard. The plan provides evidence that the system design will explicitly address enhanced access, with appropriate protections, to professionals and the public at various levels.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	12	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The plan indicates commitment to increased access, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems, or at least those linked to Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) data. Inclusion of other data for such systems is unclear. Use of experienced practitioners in training peers seems a reasonable component to the overall strategy, as does attention to building Department of Education and Field Service Center capacity. In order to encourage use of data to improve instruction, the state's plan includes both carrot and stick, professional development/supports and inclusion of TVAAS data in evaluation systems. The role of student achievement data outside of TVAAS is unclear, though included in teacher evaluation policy. The plan indicates that the not-for-profit that provides related professional development will need to address "teachers' ability to formatively use information in real time to constantly differentiate instruction for students," though it is unclear what in the plan will specifically address such ability. E.g., given that research indicates that analysis of student thinking behind assessment mistakes is critical to understanding and acting upon the varied misunderstandings that may lie behind the same assessment mistake, how that analytical capacity of teachers will be developed in the planned professional development is not clear. Also, it is not clear, though implied, that "data" tends to equate to TVAAS data, suggesting, potentially, some significant limitations to impact on instruction, even given the advanced state of the TVAAS data system. Creation of the Tennessee's Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TN CRED) provides evidence of a commitment to using state data systems for ongoing research to inform policy and practice, at state and national levels, as do design elements in proposed system development.				
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The planned development of the Electronic Learning Center, a set of resources to be available 24/7, provides evidence of support for teacher use of data systems, though the potential impact of online supports and training for teacher professional development would appear uncertain. The presentation affirmed the intent to develop a 360-degree view of the child, and to connect datasets across youth-serving agencies. Operational implementation of cross-agency integration based on such data appears to be a future development, not yet in planning stages. Potential TVAAS model limitations, as expressed in the field, appear underestimated in the plan.				
Total	47	41	41	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	15	15	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The state has strong legal, statutory, and regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, including routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. Each pathway provides ongoing support, limited coursework and generally comparable certification. However, each LEA needs to recommend to full licensure candidates who complete certification through an alternative route; the basis of that recommendation is not clear. Five alternative preparation programs exist for teachers and one for administrators. Providing further evidence of its commitment to providing high-quality outcomes-based pathways, the State Board of Education revised its policies last year to facilitate the approval process for alternative providers of certification for both teachers and principals, insisting that all programs meet common standards and be measured by the student outcomes associated with their graduates. For those programs providing data, the degree of selectivity ranges from 39% to 5%, though over 88% of those completing alternative route take the non-education major path at IHE's (offered at most campuses). Additionally, of the programs providing selectivity data, 18% do not complete the alternative route program (a high of 33% for Transition to Teaching, a "federally funded program to attract midcareer professionals to fill vacancies in critical shortage areas"). Alternative routes appear to produce a significant portion teachers each year, the vast majority through IHE's, but a far lower percentage of principals complete such a route (the totals data are unclear in the appendix). In addition to alternative routes, the state also provides an adjunct license for part-time teachers filling "high-demand" subject areas, with some 100 such individuals getting release time from their regular jobs to teach in the state. These "Distinguished Professionals" receive online training and mentoring support. While the state provides multiple pathways and has a relatively open policy environment in this regard, the application provides insufficient data to assess program selectivity and outcomes of the alternative routes described. The state provides strong evidence of its ability to monitor, evaluate and identify areas of teacher and principal shortage. The state commissioned the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville to provide extensive analysis of teacher shortage areas, and plans a subsequent analysis for principals. The state has used the data in collaboration with institutions of higher education via the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) in order to inform its statewide master plan. The THEC master plan includes measures by which IHE's in the state, which prepares the vast majority of educators in the state, has committed to addressing the state's educator shortages. The state has also initiated plans for the replication of UTeach (a program originally at University of Texas, Austin), and expansion of residency programs [such as Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR), or Teach/Here], and has a commitment for expansion from Teach for America and New Teacher Project.</p>				
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	50	50	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20	20	
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The state has a well-developed system in place by which to measure student growth via state standardized testing data, as well as a solid plan for developing and conducting annually a multiple-measure evaluation system with "objective" student achievement data comprising 50% for teachers. Evidence is provided of</p>				

attention to local LEA innovation and broad teacher/principal input/feedback on the system design, which would build upon lessons learned (as stated regarding turnaround schools in a later appendix). While allowing for local adaptation, mandated components (through the First to the Top Act) promise sufficient alignment and quality. The longstanding existence of a field-leading student achievement data system coincident with "too few" using the system to date and "haphazard" professional development would appear to have clear implications for the design of the new evaluation system, if it is to change this pattern. While local LEA autonomy appears to restrain state tenure mandates or guidelines, the state intends to use public reporting of evaluation and outcomes data to leverage use of student achievement data in local decision-making. The plan outlines the specific use of career ladders and pay incentive schemes as key levers as well, along with the possibility of other forms of LEA rewards for teachers whose students demonstrate significant achievement gains. Professional development is to become "more frequent" and "customized," based upon student achievement results; how that data will inform an assessment of teacher developmental needs, not gauged per se by student assessments, is unclear, and may speak to the gap between data system development and use in key instructional decisions.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	19	19	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	9	9	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state provides evidence of significant prior analysis and actions regarding the inequitable distribution of teachers in high-poverty or high-minority schools, as well as its efforts to address shortages in STEM, ESL and special education areas. Credible plans are outlined involving multiple partners and projects, though further evidence would appear warranted for the plan designed to address distribution by poverty/minority status as well as regarding principal distribution. The state provides data indicating that high-poverty/high-minority schools have a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers than low-poverty/low-minority schools. However, the state also reports that younger teachers at high-poverty/high-minority schools are as or more effective than their inexperienced counterparts in low-poverty/low-minority schools; this pattern diverges as one looks at more experienced teachers in each school category. This appears to explain the role of the Working Conditions Survey in the high-poverty/high-minority plan (though why it is absent in the subject/specialty area plan is unclear). Why financial incentives figure centrally in the subject/specialty plan but not in the poverty/minority plan is also unclear. Additionally, sufficient evidence is not provided to evaluate the claim that more nuanced teacher effect data reporting will address distribution issues per se, i.e., that such reporting relates specifically to distribution challenges. Finally, the claim that students in poverty make about the same rate of academic progress each year as other students, but tend to start out each year below grade level (D-184), would raise questions about the likely impact and current design of the teacher equity strategies, if student achievement gains are to be advanced as a bottom line. Per the state's evidence, for the achievement inequity to drop, the plan's design would need to address a redistribution of "highly effective" teachers, as defined by the state, toward high-poverty/high-minority schools in part perhaps by addressing the inequitable distribution of inexperienced teachers.

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The presentation affirmed particular shortages in the hard sciences and in rural areas, and also the current lack of data regarding the major drivers of inequitable distribution by poverty levels. The degree to which teacher distribution is a recruitment versus retention issue remains unclear, perhaps to be illuminated by the Working Conditions Survey and other data.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state provides a quality plan with ambitious annual targets for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs. The use of student achievement and student growth already exists in the state, and expansion of public access is scheduled for 2011-2012, after collaborative development of a program report card. Further attention to principal preparation would strengthen the plan.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	15	15	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The state describes a series of efforts to provide effective support to teachers and principals. The plan indicates an ambitious goal of dropping its percentage of ineffective teachers from 30% to 10% over four years; the timing of a key driver, the new evaluation system, may make the early year goals unrealistic. Prior trend lines in the rate of ineffective teachers are not provided. Further attention to principal preparation would strengthen the plan. The claim that new legislation gives LEA's "the flexibility to no longer pay for meaningless education or professional development" begs the question as to causes of such behavior in the past (and thus the plan's ability to address). The development of the 360-degree view of the child, particularly in its ability to link data on children from across school/non-school sectors, offers the potential to provide data to understand key drivers to achievement patterns, as the need to take into account both school and non-school data is quite apparent from the research. While the development timeline may result in limited impact during the period of the grant, this offers significant potential for operational model development in particular LEA's. The role of the Public Broadcasting System online content seems unclear. The STEM Innovation Network appears to fulfill a key need in supporting improved teaching/learning among STEM professionals. The development of Tennessee's Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TN CRED) provides a key potential means for independent analysis to inform state and LEA efforts.</p>				
Total	138	111	111	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The state has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEA's that are in improvement or corrective action status.</p>				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) <p>The state provides a detailed and quality plan for identification of lowest-achieving schools as defined in this notice. The state plan provides an escalating series of interventions/supports for schools, based on their performance rank, which in turn is based on several variables, some over time. There is clear focus on those persistently low-achieving, both in the definition of "High Priority" and, particularly, in the "lack of progress factor" that enters into the determination of which schools will get the most dramatic level of intervention (Achievement School District, then Renewal Schools, then Focus Schools). The data supports the complexity of the challenge, as only 26% of High Priority schools, 2002-2009, improved to good</p>				

standing, though 63% achieved AYP (presumably at least one year; data provided is unclear regarding performance of unique units over time). There is considerable year-to-year variance in the pattern of High Priority schools moving to good standing, ranging from 5 to 54% percent. The inclusion of a variety of support organizations, from non-profit contractors to universities, seems appropriate. The information provided by the Lessons Learned section seems worth further consideration in the design of intervention strategies, as several transformative approaches (though included within the Turnaround section) appear to have been very effective, particularly embedded, ongoing, and aligned professional development (with a special note regarding the need for local professional learning communities) and the provision of increased learning time. Such lessons appear in marked contrast to state experience with principal performance contracts, for example. Each of the approaches noted as most successful in the state -- the need to replace staff and/or address PD and instructional time -- are consistent with other states'/cities' experiences, and highlight the need for interventions to be assessed based on their ability to enhance local capacity. The degree to which these lessons learned will be included in the design of interventions in the lowest-achieving schools is not entirely clear, though several references to the need for local buy-in and adjustment to local community context seems consistent with those lessons. Further information would be needed to assess the role of "learning maps" within this plan, as well as to assess the balance of external expertise and local capacity development.

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The presentation affirmed the complexity of the challenges turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools, and the attention to political and community context in the proposed tiered approach. The continued relation of Achievement District Schools to their home districts warrants further description, though the presentation provided additional evidence of the plan's attention to the eventual transition of schools out of the Achievement District.

Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

While the portion of general fund expenditures spent on K-12 education in FY2009 rose relative to the same figure in FY2008, and that the absolute dollars in FY2009 were slightly higher, it is also true that K-12 education as a percentage of the total state budget fell slightly from FY2008 to FY2009 (14% to 13%). Several policies and funding streams, especially Basic Education Program (BEP) 2.0, continue efforts dating back to 1992 to revise funding formulae, with the intent of better serving high-needs districts. Information provided suggests greater equity in funding, but no data is provided comparing actual distribution of funds in high-need LEA's versus other LEA's.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	30	30	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Recent legislative changes provide fairly open conditions for charters and other innovative schools, though with caveats. Some limits remain, as the total cap of 90 charters represents just over 5% of all Tennessee schools, though conversions could increase that number. The policy does not open up charter access universally, though, as it targets students who qualify for free-/reduced-price lunch. Further, only districts over a certain size (14,000 students) and with 3 schools not meeting AYP for two consecutive years qualify automatically to be able to offer charters; five districts qualify, and some have caps per district (e.g., 35 in Memphis, 20 in Nashville, and 4 in Shelby County). Those districts not qualifying per above may offer charters if the school board approves (2/3 vote required), and then can only offer to those students

qualifying per above. Thus, while recent policy changes have loosened restrictions upon charters, and "charter-like" entities are possible, charters formation faces some local restraints. The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal. Authorizers encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools. Data provided on charter approvals/denials indicate a relatively high local denial rate (68%) and few successes upon appeal (23%), with reasons for denial clustered in "fiscal/academic weakness." The pattern raises concerns regarding unstated challenges to charter formation per se in the state, though possibly addressed by recent legislation. Nearly half of all charter applications occurred in 2004-05, and the high rate of denial that year ((73%) may suggest reasons behind the dramatic drop in applications the next two years (from 26 to 3, 5 respectively), and slow increase since then. Per-pupil funding and facilities support are the same across charter/non-charter schools. The application provides evidence that per-pupil allocations will be based on "one hundred percent of state and local funds received by the LEA, including current funds allocated for capital outlay purposes, excluding the proceeds of debt obligations and associated debt service." Charters face no facility requirements that are more severe than for other schools, and are required by law to receive the same per-pupil funding for capital expenses. LEA's may submit bond applications on behalf of their charters. State law provides for the formation of "charter-like" organizations through postsecondary partnerships, commissioner-waived regulations or public "schools of innovation." For example, LEA's can partner with postsecondary institutions to form alternative high schools with the same regulatory and statutory waiver options as charters, something the state intends to use to expand STEM-themed high schools. This state law provision has already been used to form five early-/middle-college high schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The state plan describes experience with differentiated compensation plans (e.g., TAP, Benwood), the recent formation of the Center for Charter School Excellence, and the recent Tennessee Race to the Top Act as evidence of other conditions supportive of reform.				
Total	55	42	42	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state presents a high-quality plan, integrated across the proposal, to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The state has forged deep partnerships across a number of STEM-capable partners, with links to the state's own significant STEM assets, and is developing an innovative cross-state collaboration with Ohio. Key to the plan is a recently-formed partnership with the Battelle Memorial Institute, "which co-manages Tennessee's own Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in a joint venture with the University of Tennessee." Battelle appears to be a strong partner for the state,

allows leveraging of prior experience in a neighboring state – the proposed teacher exchanges, e.g., would also enhance the professional community of classroom educators – and further extends existing cross-institutional/sector relationships in the STEM field within the state [e.g., The Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)]. In forming this new Tennessee STEM Innovation Network, the state provides further evidence of emerging plans to address the three major needs indicated above in a manner that integrates “previously disparate assets” in STEM.

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. Sub-section comments provide further analysis. The state outlines a significant set of initiatives, integrated around its human capital strategy development, leveraging a well-developed student achievement data system. Significant evidence of broad support is provided. The ability to affect practice at the classroom and building level remains the core challenge, including assessment and support of professional practice needs that build beyond student achievement data. In an effort to expand and/or highlight prior feedback, it should be noted that further evidence regarding the following would strengthen the plan: 1) The development/collection/analysis of qualitative/quantitative data on professional and community variables to complement the student assessment data described; further evidence warranted to gauge implementation, sustainability, formation of local capacity, shifts in professional norms, etc., including, e.g., gauges of collective efficacy, instructional practice, community engagement, parental support, working conditions, changes in use of daily time, daily professional routines, understanding of plan vision, school climate, etc.; 2) The impact of the total plan on school-level decision-making practices and demands, particularly the impact on school-level leadership practice; the plan has components to which it is committed (many seem well-warranted per evidence presented) and on set timelines; how this plan drives support rollout while also stimulating the demand-side pull from practitioners remains unclear; the plan must balance local flexibility in adapting to local context and support for this balancing warrants further clarification; 3) An opportunity exists in the continued development of longitudinal student data systems to link to non-school data, providing the greater “360-degree” view of the child, and the promise of more integrated analysis of drivers to educational performance, and thus the promise of more efficient and effective use of funds and interventions across agencies, public and private, supporting this development; 4) Data regarding local community support and civic capacity remains limited, and yet are critical factors in successful reform efforts; 5) Data regarding the drivers of inequitable teacher and principal distribution in the state; 6) Explicit strategies in how the gap between tool development/dissemination and tool use will be bridged, given the frequent experience of this gap in prior reform efforts; 7) With a public commentary period built into the rollout of the new Common Core standards, fallback strategies should be considered, should public comments/engagement demonstrate further work needed to coalesce sufficient support; and 8) Further supporting evidence of sustainability, e.g., how standing state funds would be reallocated to sustain an enhanced continuous improvement cycle, how existing funding sources would support ongoing collaborative support structures and intensive assistance, and how existing funding would support the upkeep of new standards, assessments, enhanced technologies, etc.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The presentation provided additional clarification of important aspects of the plan, and the team's understanding and candor provided solid evidence of team capacity.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	426	426	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Tennessee Application #6120TN10



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	63	63	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	44	44	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	14	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Recent legislation and a long-standing system of value-added assessments have put Tennessee in a strong position for accomplishing its goals for implementing the four education areas in the ARRA and for improving student outcomes statewide. The proposal outlines a clear and credible path to achievement of these objectives. In recent years Tennessee has made ground-breaking progress in measuring student achievement growth. Since all parts of the Department of Education's Race to the Top program depend heavily on measures of student achievement growth, the progress Tennessee has made in measuring student achievement growth gives Tennessee a head start in meeting each of the goals of Race to the Top program. The participating LEAs are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas as evidenced by the signed MOUs, which follow the model of the sample provided by the Department of Education. The terms and conditions of the MOUs reflect strong commitment. Each and every reform condition was committed to by 100% of the participating districts. Further, strong leadership support within participating LEAs is demonstrated by signatures from 100% of the participating superintendents and school board presidents and by signatures from 93% of the applicable local teachers' union leaders, including the two largest LEAs. The fact that the percentage of signatures from union leaders is only slightly less than the percentage of signatures from superintendents and school board presidents bodes well for smooth implementation of the reforms Tennessee is proposing. The fact that 100% of the States' LEAs signed the binding MOU will, no doubt, translate into broad statewide impact, helping the State reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup. The proposal makes clear that Tennessee has ambitious goals. For example, the State's assessments are changing to be aligned with Common Core assessments, which have more rigorous standards, yet Tennessee is maintaining its commendable goal of 100% proficiency. Tennessee has charted aggressive goals for decreasing achievement gaps among subgroups. The proposal argues persuasively that these far-reaching reforms are possible due to the particularly strong pledges from superintendents and school board presidents from the five largest school systems, who have pledged to support these reforms most aggressively. Tennessee has an ambitious goal of 90% for high school graduation rates. The fact that Tennessee has a strong track record in raising graduation rates, including recognition as number one in the nation for growth in graduation rates in Education Week's 2010 Quality Counts report, bodes well for Tennessee achieving this ambitious goal. The initiative that Tennessee has taken to align higher education requirements with high school graduation requirements is a strong positive indication that Tennessee can meet its ambitious goal for increasing college enrollment and the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of degree credit within two years. The fact that Tennessee states that it will continue its reform efforts beyond Race to the Top funding is another indication that awarding funding of the Tennessee proposal would be a good investment of Race to the Top funds.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	27	27	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee has a well-developed plan to oversee a Race to the Top grant. It will assemble a First to the Top Team, with members from appropriate State departments and commissions, national experts, members of the proposal development committee, and, as soon as possible, members of the team of the next governor, who will take office in January 2011. The Team is well chosen to be able to support implementation, make course corrections, and take the Race to the Top reforms well beyond the end of Race to the Top funding. Actions and activities to support participating LEAs, such as partnering with expert organizations and advisors, are mentioned in broad statements with little detail. These actions and activities will need to be determined as soon as possible. The reorganization of the Tennessee Department of Education over the next four months is intended to change the way the Department conducts its work and how it supports educators in the field. If successful, this reorganization may be of significant benefit to educators in schools and districts. Tennessee has in place high quality sophisticated systems for grant implementation, such as the Delivery Unit and the Department of Finance and Administration. These systems can be expected to ensure high quality implementation. The response to criterion (A)(2) and the Budget Narrative describe how the State is aligning current and future federal and state resources and even philanthropic and corporate support to Race to the Top goals. This alignment is a sign that effective Race to the Top reforms will be continued beyond the funding for Race to the Top. The proposal includes strong statements of support from teachers and principals, including the Tennessee Education Association, representing 55,000 teachers, principals and education support professionals, the Principals Study Council for the State of Tennessee, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents and the Coalition of Large School Systems. The proposal also includes strong letters of support from other critical stakeholders, including the stakeholders listed in the criterion.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	15	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Over the past several years Tennessee has made substantial progress in each of the four education reform areas. The repeating theme in the examples of progress described below is that Tennessee had made good use of ARRA and other Federal and State funding in each of the areas that make up the Race to the Top goals. The wise and coordinated use of these various funding sources has built a solid foundation of success on which Tennessee can now build its Race to the Top program. In addition, Tennessee has established a pattern of coordinated use of funding for overarching goals that puts Tennessee in a good position to continue to pursue its Race to the Top goals beyond the Race to the Top funding period.

Standards and Assessment: In the past several years Tennessee has taken big steps forward. It has revised standards, realigned assessments to the new standards, and developed new assessments. This cutting-edge work puts Tennessee in strong position provide leadership in the Race to the Top program.

Data systems: Building on its vast value-added data system, Tennessee built a statewide student management system and a longitudinal data system. This ongoing progress in data systems is an example of Tennessee's coordinated use of funding to make coordinated progress on the State's long-term goals. This pattern of coordinated use of funding to reach goals that remain consistent over time is one source of the strength of Tennessee's proposal and signals that Race to the Top funds would make a meaningful long-term improvement in education in Tennessee.

Great teachers and leaders: Tennessee had a good head start in assuring that students have great teachers and that schools have great leaders. With coordinated

use of Federal funds and other funds, Tennessee has, for example, created professional development programs for school leaders. It has also collaborated with LEAs to reduce inequities in the distribution of effective teachers in low-achieving schools and in high-need subjects, with incentives and performance pay. Turning around lowest-achieving schools: Since 2004 Tennessee has been assisting lowest-achieving schools through its Exemplary Educators program and other activities coordinated by an office dedicated to assisting districts with achievement gaps. These efforts provide Tennessee a solid foundation of progress in each of the four education reform areas. However, Tennessee has not yet made solid progress in improving student outcomes, the second part of this criterion. Since 2003 Tennessee has significantly increased achievement and narrowed some achievement gaps as measured by state assessments. However, these positive results on the state assessments are not supported by NAEP results. To its credit, Tennessee is not satisfied with its assessment results. Tennessee recognizes that its state assessments are not sufficiently rigorous and is looking forward to new assessments based on tougher Common Core standards. Graduation rates have consistently increased. However, again, Tennessee is not satisfied. It recognizes that its graduation rate calculations are not sufficiently rigorous and is looking forward to the tougher calculations of graduation rates now in progress. Admirably, as it toughens its achievement assessments and its graduation rate calculations, Tennessee will stick to its high goals. Tennessee connects its rise in achievement on state assessments to two strategies: creating an accountability system for all schools and designing supports for teachers and schools. Tennessee connects its success in increasing its graduation rate to its decision to set an ambitious goal of 90%, as well as to a variety of supports and policy changes. The fact that Tennessee has had these strategies in place for years and the fact that it has ambitious goals put Tennessee in a position to begin its Race to the Top work.

Total	125	110	110	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has signed an MOU to join the 48-State Common Core consortium and is on schedule for a July 2010 adoption of the Common Core.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	9	9	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee is a member of five consortia and will explore these options and select a way to develop common assessments. However, two of the five consortia involve fewer than 25 States. Since it is not yet known which consortium or consortia Tennessee will select, the proposal does not fully meet the criterion of working with "a significant number of States."				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	19	19	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Providing a smooth statewide transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments is a challenging endeavor. Tennessee is prepared to meet the challenge. First, Tennessee has the advantage of experience and success in this endeavor. The proposal reports on the past two years of work with teachers,				

administrators, higher education institutions, and the business community in developing new standards and introducing them into the schools. Second, the proposed plan is both creative and comprehensive. Some of the many promising aspects of the Tennessee plan that are predictive of a smooth statewide transition are as follows: • Steps to align end-of-course assessments at the high school level with common placement scores at the college and university level. • A new school accountability system with measures of college- and career-ready expectations • New requirement for admission to public colleges and universities to include completion of the high school Ready Core Curriculum, with its increased math and science requirements • Community partnerships • Professional development, based on a statewide needs assessment and focused on the Common Core Standards and Assessments, to be provided in a variety of ways, including online and in-person • A plan for development of "Lessons Learned" by year four, including the development of toolkits • Targeted technical assistance in low-achieving schools, using a Train the Trainer concept with Targeted Assistance Teams • Balanced assessments including both formative and summative assessments • A plan for university pre-service teacher training programs to train teachers in the use of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System. In summary, Tennessee has experience in successful transitions and has developed a comprehensive and creative plan for a statewide transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. However, the details of the plan are not sufficiently described to ascertain to what extent the expected results are fully achievable within the time frame.

Total	70	68	68	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The proposal presents evidence that the Tennessee data system includes all 12 elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee has two rich databases that have tremendous potential for providing feedback to school leaders, teachers, and parents, for assessing the effects of the district, school, or teacher, and for predicting future student performance. The State has a solid plan for making optimal use of these data and has already made data accessible to every educator in the State.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Tennessee's plan to increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems recognizes that there are many ways to make things happen. Tennessee wisely has developed a robust plan that uses a wide variety of methods. For example, Tennessee plans to do the following: • Train every district in the State to use data for instruction • Provide direct and user-friendly access to the State's data assets • Support LEAs in learning how to use data to accomplish educational goals • Take advantage of the fact that there are districts in the State that have been using these systems for years, showcasing these leaders and providing opportunities for others to learn from them • Provide tools and training to districts • Make wise use of the recent legislative mandate of the significant student achievement growth component in teacher and principal evaluations as an impetus for engaging teaching and principals in the use of student growth data. Although this list of activities is long and impressive, most of the activities are focused on assessment for information about student learning, rather than on assessment for improvement of student learning at the classroom level. Further consideration of how to use assessments to improve student learning at the classroom level is needed. Tennessee's plan for professional development is				

multifaceted and includes plans to do the following: • Work with non-profit training partners • Build the capacity of the Tennessee Department of Education to support these professional development activities beyond the four-year Race to the Top funding. • Deliver training both online and in-person • Support higher education teacher and principal preparation programs in integrating training models for use of data in instructional improvement systems. Tennessee is eager to share its data with researchers, believing that their rich database can help answer critical questions about American education. In addition, Tennessee plans to use the database for its own research and is creating the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development for this purpose.

Total	47	44	44	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	15	15	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee's proposal presents evidence that Tennessee has legal, statutory, and regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. State law gives the State Board of Education complete jurisdiction over issuance and administration of licenses for teachers and principals. Accordingly, the Board of Education has promulgated rules (that have the force of law) for alternative licensing paths for teacher and principal preparation programs. The proposal presents evidence that these Board of Education rules fulfill each of the five elements of alternative routes to certification as defined in the Race to the Top application. Tennessee has five well-established alternative programs for teachers and one for school leaders. The proposal outlines the elements of each of the programs. With 1300 to 1600 annually receiving licenses from these providers, Tennessee's alternative programs are having a significant impact on the training of teachers. However, in terms of numbers to date, they are having little effect of the training of principals, a weakness in the response to the second part of the criterion. Tennessee has a current study on teacher shortages and is constructing a study of supply and demand for school leaders. Through the Master Plan for Higher Education and through funding formulas, institutions of higher education have incentives to address shortages. The State is growing its traditional and alternative programs through initiatives such as UTeach, expanding residency programs for teachers and principals, and using alternative pathways such as Teach for America. In short, Tennessee has a plan to identify and begin to address areas of shortages of teachers and principals. However, there is not sufficient evidence in the proposal to demonstrate that the efforts planned will be sufficient to address the shortages, a weakness in the response to the third part of this criterion.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	55	55	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Since 1992 Tennessee has had a system to measure the academic growth rates in individual students and associate these with teachers, schools and districts. The experience that Tennessee has had with this system will be a tremendous benefit as it proceeds to give teachers access to their own performance data

and to train teachers, principals, and students in teacher and principal preparation programs on the use of student growth data. Tennessee's largest districts are already using its student achievement growth database to develop multiple-measure teacher evaluations featuring student achievement growth. In Tennessee the next step is to take these practices to scale. Recent Tennessee legislation calls for the creation of a Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee to develop guidelines and criteria for multiple-measure teacher and principal effectiveness evaluation systems to be administered annually to all teachers and principals. LEAs will have the ability to solicit teacher and principal input on the evaluation system. Tennessee can be commended for its initiative and its progress in the essential task of evaluating teachers and principals based to a significant extent on student academic growth. Recent Tennessee legislation requires annual reviews of all teachers and principals. Central to the evaluation system will be feedback to the teacher or principal, who will be trained to access and use their own student growth data. When Tennessee's new evaluation system debuts in 2011, it will be used in making decisions for all critical human capital decisions including development of customized approaches to professional development and support. The new evaluation system will also be used for compensating, promoting, and retaining effective teachers and principals, including opportunities for additional compensation and added responsibilities. Tennessee is proposing a partnership among districts, unions, and communities to develop differentiated roles and compensation structures for teachers that reward effective performance. Tennessee may be commended for these thoughtful and bold actions. The State has the ambitious goal to ensure that only those teachers who have met an established performance threshold are granted tenure, yet there is not sufficient evidence that the State will be successful since the State can merely make recommendations to districts regarding tenure. The State has the ambitious goal to ensure that in four years it has reduced the percentage of teachers and principals who are ineffective to below 10%, and thereafter to zero. However, there is not sufficient evidence that the State will be successful since the State can merely encourage districts to examine those teachers who are consistently categorized in the lower levels of effectiveness for the possibility of termination. Tennessee has made commendable progress in its development of student growth measures and it has a plan to use these measures in all of the personnel decisions mentioned in this criterion.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	20	20	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	11	11	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Tennessee's plan for equitable distribution of effective teachers is made particularly powerful by the fact that Tennessee is already measuring student achievement growth that can be used to determine the effectiveness of teachers. The Tennessee plan for ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers is enhanced by the recognition that not only must greater numbers of effective teachers be attracted to and retained by high poverty and/or high minority schools, but that current teachers must be helped and given incentives to become more effective teachers. Tennessee presents a wise and comprehensive plan for improving teacher effectiveness. Although the proposal does a good job of addressing the equitable distribution of effective teachers, it does very little to address the equitable distribution of effective principals. Tennessee's plan for addressing shortages in high-need subjects and specialties focuses not only on producing more teachers in these areas, but on encouraging local compensation incentives to attract and retain highly effective teachers. The plan includes essential partnerships, such as with the STEM Centers. A weakness of the plan is that Tennessee lacks an appropriate measure of effectiveness of special education teachers. However, the plan does include the development of a measure of special education teaching effectiveness.				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee is already doing analyses that determine which teacher preparation programs prepare the highest-achieving graduates. LEAs in Tennessee can and do use this data to increase recruitment, selection and hiring from preparation programs whose teachers achieve better outcomes. Furthermore, Tennessee already publicly reports this data for each credentialing program in the State. The State has a plan to develop a high quality plan for expanding preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals. Tennessee has identified stakeholder groups to be represented on a committee to convene in 2010. The committee is expected by 2011 to have a fully developed plan, including a way to hold principal preparation programs to similar standards. The fact that attention to principal preparation programs lags behind attention to teacher preparation programs is a weakness of the response.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals

20

16

16

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

In the words of Tennessee's proposal, "Teacher effect data and the new annual teacher and principal evaluation data will drive all professional development investments made in the state of Tennessee, leading to unprecedented and targeted support for our teachers." This claim may be reasonable, considering Tennessee's well-developed data sets and the proposal's central focus on use of student achievement growth data to improve teaching and learning. Tennessee's plan to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of these supports is to invest in development of Tennessee's Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development. Based on Tennessee's focus on data and research, this plan is likely to produce information that can and will be used to improve professional development. Tennessee has a plan with the ambitious goal of ensuring that less than 10% of the educator force is ineffective four years from now. There is not sufficient evidence in the proposal to indicate that this goal is achievable, a limitation of the response to this criterion.

Total

138

119

119

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The proposal presents clear evidence that the Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010 gives the State authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee has already established a process for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools. Tennessee will transform its persistently lowest-achieving schools into schools of accelerated academic excellence through three key strategies: • A state-run Achievement School District • Adoption of a proven reform method in Renewal Schools, which are not placed into the Achievement School District •

Implementation of one of the four turnaround models in each persistently lowest-achieving school. The proposal outlines "lessons learned" from Tennessee's years of experience with school accountability. One lesson stands out: the observation that, historically, Tennessee has not been bold enough. Taking that lesson seriously, the proposal outlines a bold reform plan. Tennessee will establish an Achievement School District, a groundbreaking approach that will capitalize on the newly created authority of the State, best practice research on school turnaround and unprecedented partnerships with non-profit groups. Tennessee will remove designated schools from their home LEA and place them under the direction of the commissioner of Education. Tennessee has demonstrated in this proposal that it has the capacity for success in the Achievement School District and in its reform plans for persistently lowest-achieving schools not placed in the Achievement School District. Tennessee's experience with school accountability, the lessons it has learned, and its clear focus on data and results demonstrate that Tennessee clearly has the capacity for success in its turnaround plans.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Despite the State's financial challenges, education funding was protected and its percentage of available funds increased. The proposal presents financial data that shows that the percentage of total revenues available to the State for public K-12 and higher education increased from 43% to 48% between FY 20008 and FY 2009. Tennessee's progressive policies on equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, as well as within high-poverty and low-poverty schools, have resulted in a school funding formula that boosted average expenditures per student from \$3,732 in 1991-92 to \$8,345 in 2007-08, an increase of 124%, according to the Department of Education's 21st Century Schools Report Card. The latest revamping of the formula reduced inequities by steering more funds for targeted spending to high-need schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools

40	33	33	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Tennessee charter school law does have a cap on charter schools. The cap is 90 schools statewide, with a cap of 35 in Memphis, 20 in Nashville and 4 in Shelby County. The law defines charter school qualifying districts, which must have a minimum enrollment of 14,000 students and must have had at least three schools that missed AYP for two consecutive years. All students who are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch in qualifying districts are eligible to attend charter schools. In non-qualifying districts a two-thirds vote of the local school board can authorize a charter school serving students who qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch. The proposal states that Tennessee is strongly committed to growing the number of charter schools and anticipates that positive outcomes from existing charter schools will result in political support to raise or lift the cap on charter schools. It is important for Tennessee to raise or lift the cap in order for the students of Tennessee to benefit from the full potential of charter schools. Tennessee State law governs how charter schools are approved, monitored, held accountable, reauthorized, or closed. The law does a particularly good job of setting standards that recognize the importance of student achievement and the importance of serving high-need students. Charter schools are required to submit annual reports, including progress toward academic goals, to the LEA and to the Tennessee commissioner of education. LEAs conduct periodic monitoring visits, and the Department of Education conducts an audit every five years to determine whether the charter's goals are being met. Failing to make adequate progress in student achievement is one of the reasons a charter school may be closed. One charter school was closed in 2007. State law assures that charter schools serve high-need students and populations similar to the local population: • If any charter school class or grade is oversubscribed, enrollment is determined by lottery. •

First priority is given to students who are eligible because they failed to reach proficiency, or are zoned to or are attending a school that failed to make AYP. • Second priority is given to students who qualify because of free- or reduced-price lunch. The proposal presents solid evidence that funding for charter schools is equitable. Tennessee law requires that charter school students receive the same per-pupil funding that would have followed them to a school district if the students had enrolled in a non-charter public school. The law states that these per-pupil allocations will be based on "one hundred percent of state and local funds received by the LEA." Federal funding has been awarded to each charter school in the State through the federal public Charter Schools Program. The proposal presents solid evidence that the State provides charter schools with equitable funding, assistance, access and other supports for facilities and that facilities-related requirements are equitable. Tennessee law requires that charter school students receive per-pupil funding for capital expenses. Tennessee imposes no facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The proposal describes three other conditions favorable to education reform in Tennessee. Although the proposal presents no evidence that these innovations have, as yet, increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes, each of the three favorable conditions has the potential to have a powerful positive effect on these important outcomes. First, State law passed in 2007 requires districts to submit differentiated pay plans to the State Department of Education, paving the way for experimentation in this area. Second, a charter school "incubator," headed by a proven expert, will recruit, develop and train charter school leaders. Third, the Tennessee First to the Top Act passed in January 2010 establishes a committee to create a new annual teacher and principal evaluation instrument that includes student achievement growth, establishes an Achievement School District and other new accountability rules for the State's lowest-performing schools, and enables teacher effect data to be sent to institutions of higher education for analysis of the institution's effectiveness.				
Total	55	47	47	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Tennessee is partnering with Battelle Memorial Institute to establish a statewide network of programs and schools designed to promote and expand the teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and math. Tennessee intends to dramatically accelerate STEM education through the development of the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network. The proposal demonstrates Tennessee's capacity to carry out a plan to offer a rigorous course of study in STEM disciplines, connect schools with other partners and prepare more students for STEM careers, including underrepresented groups and women and girls. The STEM initiative is addressed throughout the proposal, indicating that it will be an integral part of Tennessee's Race to the Top efforts.				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>Tennessee has presented a strong plan to comprehensively and coherently address each of the four education reform areas, and the State has presented a strong record of success in education reform in its response to the State Success Factors Criterion. Tennessee has 100% participation of the State's LEAs and 100% of these LEAs have committed to 100% of the goals of the plan. The proposal demonstrates how the States will use Race to the Top funds and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and career. Tennessee is well positioned for this work, with its consistency in combining Federal, State, and other funding to reach its educational goals, with its forward-looking legislation, and with its development and use of groundbreaking data systems for student achievement growth. With the education reform progress that Tennessee has made to date, and with its strong plan for meeting the goals of Race to the Top, Tennessee is prepared to make exemplary use of Race to the Top funding. Tennessee is well on its way to establishing a culture of achievement in all of its schools. Race to the Top funding will enable Tennessee to secure this culture of achievement so that the reforms made with Race to the Top funding will continue beyond the funding period and so that further reforms will grow out of this culture of achievement.</p> <p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</p> <p>The presentation confirmed my three assumptions about the Tennessee Race to the Top plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear sense of urgency regarding the need to improve student achievement. • This sense of urgency, as well as enthusiasm for the plan, is shared across constituencies. • The Tennessee Race to the Top plan is thoughtfully designed and can be expected to take Tennessee "to the Top." 				

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	453	453	